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A PROPOSED PROGRAM OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The committee of the American Economic Association on the teaching of economics presents as a basis of discussion by members of the Association a proposal for social studies in the secondary schools.¹ The members of the committee hope that they will receive many criticisms and suggestions, and that, guided by these, they may be able to continue their study to better advantage.

The committee has chosen to present for discussion a program which refers primarily to the work of the junior high school. It has emphasized this *one* field because of its belief that a single, clear-cut proposal will facilitate discussion of fundamental issues rather better than several proposals. It has chosen this particular field partly because the 6-3-3 organization seems likely to be the dominant secondary school organization of the future and partly because the coming in of the 6-3-3 organization gives an opportunity to work out a plan in the junior high school that will not be too greatly hampered by custom and tradition. Then, too, it is not difficult to derive a program for the orthodox four-year high school from the program of the six-year junior-senior high school in case one is primarily interested in the four-year plan. The committee has, indeed, made certain suggestions on page 74, for a four-year program.

It will facilitate study of the proposal of the committee to set forth at this time the considerations which were in mind during its formulation. Briefly stated, these considerations were as follows:

1. The organization of social studies in the public schools should be in terms of the purpose of introducing those studies. Their purpose is that of giving our youth an awareness of what it means to live together in organized society, an appreciation of how we do live together, and an understanding of the conditions precedent to living together well, to the end that our youth may develop those ideals, abilities, and tendencies to act which are essential to effective participation in our society. The range of this statement is very broad. For example: the contribution of knowledge and physical environment to our social living is quite as worthy of attention as are the principles of economics or government. Parenthetically, it may be noted that "awareness," "appreciation," and "understanding" come only when descriptive facts are presented in their relationships.

¹The membership of this committee is as follows: E. L. Bogart, E. E. Day, J. E. Hagerty, W. H. Hamilton, W. H. Kiekhofer, W. D. Lewis, M. S. Wildman, L. C. Marshall (Chairman). Messrs. Hamilton and Wildman were not able to be present at the conference of the committee.

2. The question should not be "how to put the social studies into our curricula" but "how to organize our curricula around social objectives." The social studies should be the backbone of secondary education, with which all other studies and school activities should be closely articulated according to their contributions to the social objectives of education. Since each individual must be a citizen and as such must participate in group action, the social studies should be represented in each grade of education, and every pupil should have at least one unit of social study in every year of the school course. As for the specific junior high school courses mentioned below on pages 69-73, there is no attempt to decide whether they should be unit courses or half-unit courses. Possibly they should be so drawn as to make either arrangement possible according to local needs and resources.

It is essential that we free our minds from any such issue as the claims of history *vs.* those of economics, *vs.* those of government, *vs.* those of sociology. Those claims will largely disappear in any vital discussion of the contribution of social studies to our social living. These branches of social study are not separable, save for the purpose of emphasizing some particular point of view on social living.

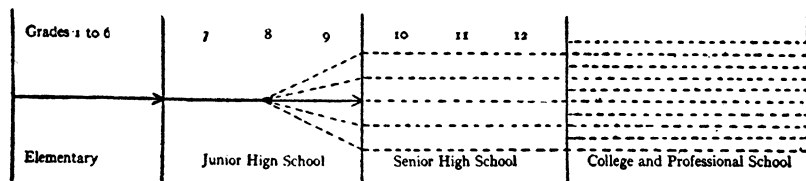
3. The social studies should be directed toward an understanding of the physiology rather than the pathology of social living. This does not mean that pathology is to be disregarded, but it does mean that it should not occupy the center of attention. Such a position does not reject the "problem method" of instruction. That method should be quite freely used; but it should be directed toward understanding the physiology of society. The center of attention should be our social living in this country and how it came to be what it is. Just what should occupy this center of attention is the essence of the problem. There will presumably be put in the background of attention (but it is still in the field of attention) some material now occupying a prominent place in our social studies. Such background material should be presented (a) in required courses only to the extent to which it contributes significantly to the understanding of our social living and (b) in elective courses.

4. Any program of social studies which hopes to be successful must be drawn with consideration for vocational curricula. This suggests no conflict of interests. Men *work* together in organized society. Vocational training will be greatly improved—even as a "money-making" matter for the individual—by the right kind of social study backbone.

5. The program of social studies which is drawn with recognition of the great losses in our student constituency in certain years seems

likely to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number, provided this does not mean too great weakening of basic training. It will be found that the program later suggested is drawn with this situation in mind and that it does not neglect to provide for continuity and progression.

6. The reorganization which is now in process in our educational system (which opens up the seventh and eighth grades for the introduction of new material) justifies a somewhat daring attempt to think through, as a coherent whole, our presentation of secondary social studies, without too much regard for traditional claims or customary practices. More specifically, there is here an opportunity to introduce *social study* rather than specialized branches of social studies. This reorganization also makes it wise for us to plan our curricula so as to enable us to realize the educational possibilities of the new organization. Properly understood, this so-called 6-3-3 or 6-6 arrangement or any other comparable plan means far more than the administrative device of taking two years away from the elementary school and bestowing them upon the high school. It contemplates the entire reorganization of the curriculum to the end that without loss of training (its advocates claim there will be a gain) two years of time may be saved and students may be carried by the end of the twelfth grade to approximately the position now reached by the end of the sophomore year in college.²



Clearly enough, the movement is on and is on vigorously and the educational system which seems likely to result may be crudely represented by the above diagram. A fairly coherent and unified system of training in fundamental processes in the elementary schools will be followed by the junior high school, in which it is at least desirable that the basic consideration shall be training in citizenship, with the beginnings of specialization occurring only in the later stages of that school. This will be followed by the senior high school in which, parallel with the college-preparatory course so called, will certainly go very considerable ranges of vocational training. The college and the pro-

²Preliminary experiments have already been conducted in this field with the result of saving one year of time, and experiments are well under way to bring about the saving of another year.

fessional school will receive the graduates of the senior high school, who will bring an equipment comparable with that possessed by the present junior in college, if the reorganization works out successfully.

7. An effective program of social studies will be organized in terms of the psychology of learning. The average child of the seventh grade is at least beginning to have a social consciousness. His mind is reaching out to understand his relationships to other people and to society as a whole. The fact that he is not aware of his developing attitude does not interfere with making use of this interest.

The unfolding of the social studies should not be too rapid to allow the student to build up an apperceptive basis for his thinking. Accordingly the program suggested passes (1) from a seventh grade discussion of *types* of social organization and some *conditioning factors* of the types, (2) through an eighth grade survey of the *development* and *practices* of our modern social organization, (3) to a ninth grade discussion of *principles* of social organization, and (4) ultimately to a senior high school discussion of social science material in somewhat more specialized terms. Such a development will contribute markedly to "giving our youth an awareness of what it means to live together in organized society, an appreciation of how we do live together, and an understanding of the conditions precedent to living together well, to the end that our youth may develop those ideals, abilities and tendencies to act which are essential to effective participation in our society."

8. The program of social studies which is drawn in such a way as to minimize administrative difficulties will, other things being equal, be most rapidly introduced.

So much for background considerations. As a statement prefatory to the junior high school proposal, it is assumed that in the first six grades students have acquired certain tools and methods of study, and that they have been given a body of material in history, community civics, and geography which will serve as a foundation for the studies suggested below. It is recognized that the successful introduction of such a junior high school program as is sketched below would in time influence rather profoundly the work of the first six grades. But that is another story.

A Summary View of the Proposed Junior High School Program.

It will facilitate later discussion to present at this point, without explanation or supporting argument, a summary view of the proposal as a whole. This summary view will present, in specific terms, only the work in social studies.

- A. The seventh grade:
 - 1. Geographic bases of United States development
 - 2. Social science survey (types of social organization)
 - (a) Simple industry and simple society
 - (b) The transforming effects of scientific knowledge
 - 3. Other studies, correlated so far as may be practicable with the social study material.
- B. The eighth grade:
 - 1. The opening of the world to the use of man
 - 2. Vocational survey (presented in functional terms so that it may contribute to an understanding of *our* type of social organization)
 - 3. Other studies, correlated so far as may be practicable with the social study material.
- C. The ninth grade:
 - 1. The history of the United States (presented with "citizenship material" occupying the center of attention)
 - 2. Principles of social organization (economic, political, social)
 - 3. Other studies, correlated so far as may be practicable with the social study material

A Detailed View of the Work of the Seventh Grade

The work of this grade sets out consciously to "give our youth an awareness of what it means to live together in organized society, an appreciation of how we do live together, and an understanding of the conditions precedent to living together well." Its emphasis is upon the first and third of these propositions, without at all neglecting the second. The survey of types of social organization in simple societies emphasizes the first; the survey of the transforming effects of scientific knowledge, the work in geography, and the work in science (which will presumably be given in this grade) emphasize the third. Of course, there is no intention of making a sharp differentiation in treatment. The foregoing statement of purpose may be stated differently. The work of this grade seeks to sweep together, into a somewhat organic whole, the social study work of the first six grades, and to take a further step in *generalized* thinking in the field.

The work in geographic bases of United States development is designed:

- 1. To bring into an organic whole the preceding work in history, civics and geography in such a way as to
- 2. Show the importance of physical environment with respect to conditions precedent to living together well and to
- 3. Prepare the way, in terms of principles, for the work of the next two grades and to

4. Give the student who can go no farther a significant contribution to his "appreciation of how we live together and understanding of the conditions precedent to living well."

The social science survey of types of social organization is designed:

1. To bring into an organic whole the preceding work in history, civics and geography in such a way as to prepare the way, in terms of principles, for the work of the next two grades.
2. To lay a comparative basis for the later more careful survey of the evolutionary development of the functioning social structure.
3. To give the student who can go no farther a significant contribution to his "awareness of what it means to live together in organized society, appreciation of how we do live together and understanding of the conditions precedent to living together well."

The suggested method of presenting this social science survey material is as follows:

1. Present a series of snapshots of simple types of social organization as the life of neolithic man; the life of the Iroquois; the life of nomads; life in a medieval manor; life in a medieval town; life in a modern secluded mountain district; life in a frontier mining camp;

in which the student can see how such matters as education, religion, health, social control, economic activities, etc., (these are only samples) were cared for and can begin to see wherein our ways of caring for such matters are different, if different.

This comparative study should be directed toward bringing out certain concepts, of which the following may be taken as samples, (they are only samples):

self sufficiency *vs.* interdependence
customary *vs.* competitive methods
non-exchange *vs.* exchange society
non-industrial *vs.* industrial society
the shifting emphasis in social control
the modern coöperation of specialists

with the idea of leading the student to "generalize" his knowledge and with the further idea of preparing him for the study of "principles" in the ninth grade.

2. The latter part of the grade is to be devoted to showing the contribution of knowledge "to our living together *well*" and how that reacts upon the type of social organization. This should be no mere threadbare account of the Industrial Revolution; it should be an account of the transforming effects of science on our ways of living together. Notice that the way has been prepared by the student's work in science, if science is also presented in this grade.

A Detailed View of the Work of the Eighth Grade

There is presumably no need for a detailed statement of the general purpose of the work of this grade. It is obvious that, in addition to caring properly for those who must drop out at the end of the year, this grade must (a) begin to give many students a rational basis for selection of vocations and (b) continue the preparation for the more generalized social study of the ninth grade.

The work in "The opening of the world to the use of man" is designed:

1. To knit together and to build upon the social science survey and geography of the preceding grade in such a way that the student will get as a part of his mental machinery—as tools of which he will make *conscious* use—concepts of change, development, and continuity.
2. In respect to factual background, to give the student some appreciation of the long hard trail the human race has climbed; to let him see the emergence of western civilization, its spread over the earth and its contacts with other civilizations.
3. To give the student the "world background" against which the history of his own country (ninth grade) may be seen in perspective; and to make him "cosmopolitan" and "international" in a wholesome sense of those words.

The vocational survey is designed:

1. To give the student an opportunity (upon which their experience has caused so many school men to insist) to think through *in specific terms* his own possible contribution to social living. Whether this results in his actually "choosing a vocation" matters little, if at all. Out of it, he should get a clearer notion of the qualities making for individual success in the process of social living.
2. To give this, however, not as a set of maxims and preachments and not as a set of "job analyses" but as a survey of the activities (emphasizing here economic activities without neglecting political and social considerations) which are carried on in *our* type of social organization and
3. To do this in such a way that he will get a glimpse of *an economic organization* in which activities are *in terms of social purposes*. By way of illustration, the student who sees the "undifferentiated" medieval trader split up as time goes on into transporter, insurer, financier, seller, etc., will have a different conception of the work of railroads, insurance companies, banks, etc., from the one he would have had after an unconnected study of occupations. In other words, the vocational survey is designed to give the student a more thorough and specific conception of our social organization as it actually operates in our living together.

A Detailed View of the Work of the Ninth Grade

Here, also, a detailed statement of general purpose may be omitted. Looking back over the junior high school curriculum, this year's work seeks to knit together the preceding work (a) in terms of *principles* and (b) in terms of their application to citizenship in our own country. Looking forward to the work of the senior high school, this year's work seeks to pave the way for the more specialized presentation of the social sciences.

The work in the history of the United States (presented with "citizenship material" occupying the center of attention) is self-explanatory, if it be kept in mind that the ideal is that of bringing the social science work of the preceding grades, as well as that of this ninth grade, to a focus in this account of the development of our own social living together. Such a statement indicates the kind of history which is to be presented.

The work in principles of social organization assumes that the student has been given sufficient factual background and has attained a sufficient maturity to enable him to view our social living in terms of *principles* rather than in terms of *types* or of *practices*. It asks the student, to do, *as a conscious matter*, a most fundamental thing, namely, *seek relationships on a scale which will give him an organic view of our social living*. He is asked (so far as he may now be able) to formulate *consciously* the principles of social living which should guide him in later years. It is to be noticed in passing that no such opportunity now exists in any stage of our school curriculum. It is conceivable that the first draft of this will have to be in three parts: (1) economic organization, (2) political organization, (3) social organization not otherwise handled. But it is hoped and expected that it may be done not as three parts but as one unified whole.

A Hint of the Program of the Senior High School

The foregoing presents the material on which the committee particularly covets discussion. It is, however, desirable to show something of the possibilities of such a plan as the student goes on to the senior high school. It is assumed that in each year of the senior high school, some social study work will be required and that the work will be presented in more specialized (scientific?) form than it was in the earlier grades.

The following statement gives merely a suggestion of possible courses in the fields of economics and business. Our larger high schools, at least, might in time offer considerable choice of courses in the fields that we now designate as political science, history, psychology and sociology.

1. The Financial Organization of Society and the Manager's Administration of Finance.
2. The Market Organization of Society and the Manager's Administration of the Market.
3. The Position of the Worker in Our Society and Personnel Administration.
4. The Evolution of Our Economic Society (note that this is vastly more than a "History of Commerce" and vastly more than the typical "Industrial History").
5. Accounting (not merely as bookkeeping but also as an instrument of control in the hands of the executive).
6. Business Law (as a manifestation of social control of business activity and as a facilitating aid of business).
7. Such *technical* courses as may be expedient. An illustration is Shorthand and Typewriting.
8. Theories of Value and Distribution.

A Four-Year High School Program

The Committee desires to emphasize its presentation of a possible six-year junior-senior high school program of social studies, and it therefore passes by the four-year program (notwithstanding the fact that the 8-4 form is still the dominant type of our educational organization) with no comment other than the suggestion that valuable material for a four-year course of social study could be selected from the junior high school program sketched in the preceding pages. Just what would be selected might well vary from place to place according to what had been accomplished in the first six grades.